

The Reality of Pediatric Rehab

September 2015

Joe's Kids has been blessed with tremendous growth over the past year and a half. Since opening our doors in February 2014, we have more than doubled in size. We are now operating with a staff of 6 therapists including 3 full time and 3 part time and are looking to expand to two more full time positions in speech and occupational therapy. There are few pediatric therapists serving in Northern Indiana and filling these positions is a challenge. Hiring therapists is not only difficult here at Joe's Kids, but in the school system, Indiana First Steps and other pediatric clinics in surrounding communities as well. At Joe's, we believe that the long term solution for this lies in student programs. By partnering with local high schools, colleges, and universities, we seek to instill the passion for serving special children into our students and to ultimately bring them

back to serve in our community. We are already working with Warsaw Community High School, Grace College and Indiana Wesleyan to provide student internship experiences. We fully expect the next 5 years or more to be a challenge in staffing, but by partnering with our schools we hope to share our desire for special kids with these students that they too may choose to spend their careers helping special kids to realize their full potential. We are grateful to the academic institutions who have already **Joined Our Effort**.



Joe's Kids 1st Annual Dinner, Tailgate and Auction — set for September 26th

Plans are coming together nicely as our event is less than 2 weeks away. This is Joe's Kids 1st Annual Dinner, Tailgate and Auction. Preparations for this fundraiser started many months ago with a team of volunteers coming together and planning the nights events.

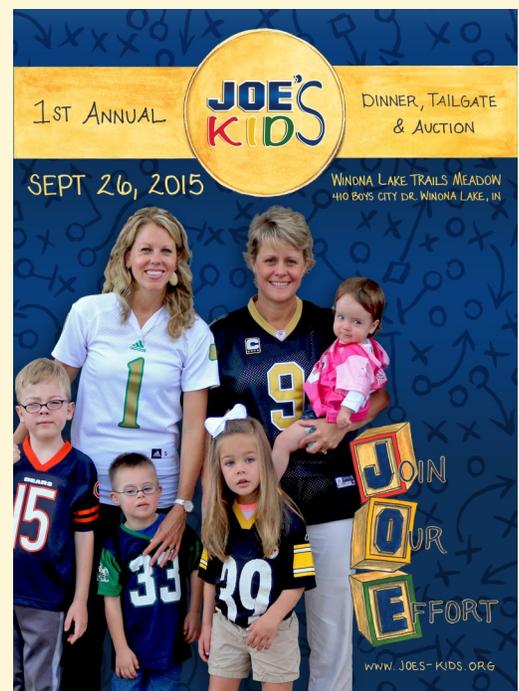
We are happy to announce that Parkview Warsaw is the event sponsor. "We are excited to partner with Parkview Warsaw for this fundraising event," Rebecca Bazzoni stated.

This event will be held on Saturday, September 26th at the Winona Lake Trails Meadow. This is a casual, sports themed event and we have been encouraging everyone to come dressed in their favorite team jersey. Registration and tailgate begins at 4:30 with a formal presentation beginning at 6:00.

We have over 50 items that will sell through the silent auction. A couple of the live auction items are: 2 tickets to the Colts vs. Patriots game, a vacation home in Hawaii for a week and many, many more items.

To be a part of this event you may go to this link and register.

<https://fundly.com/joes-kids-dinner-tailgate>





JOE'S KIDS Superstar



My husband, Paul, and I have been caring for Yann for the last year. Yann is almost 6 and is from the Ivory Coast, Africa. He was born with Spina Bifida Myelomeningocele and Hydrocephalus. As a baby he received a shunt to help relieve fluid on his brain, but surgery to cover his exposed spinal cord was never performed. Ray of Hope Medical Missions, a Fort Wayne based non-profit organization, identified Yann as a candidate for their medical assistance program. Ray of Hope brings sick or injured children from medically deprived countries for life changing surgeries. They secured medical care for Yann at CS Motts Children's Hospital in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and he arrived in Indiana in September 2014. He is scheduled to return home in March 2016 once he is medically released by his physicians. In addition to spinal surgery, Yann received a new shunt. His chances of continuing with a functioning shunt through adulthood are much higher now.

Yann is very mobile, which is pretty incredible considering that he lived for so long with an exposed spinal cord. He loves to run, play soccer and basketball, and ride his bike. He is slow compared to his peers because his body has to compensate for strength that is lacking in so many areas. One of my favorite things about Yann is that he never lets anything stop him. He has no idea that his disability slows him down or makes him different in a way that should keep him from being active. Unfortunately, his lack of strength will make his life more difficult and will only continue to get worse as he grows older without therapy. His legs have to be trained to walk correctly and to strengthen certain areas that are not naturally used due to the way that his body developed.



Joe's Kids has been a huge blessing in Yann's life. In addition to providing life changing therapy, the therapist was able to connect us with MidWest Orthotics who donated leg braces for Yann. We have noticed a huge difference in Yann's gait and stance. He stands tall now and is able to walk with strength I never knew possible. The thing that impresses me so much is that Rebecca is so knowledgeable as well as aware of Yann's specific situation. As Yann probably won't be able to receive therapy once he returns to Africa, she regularly communicates with me steps that we can take to push and grow him in the short time that he is here. She has searched out specific activities that he enjoys and focuses on those things to strengthen him. Yann never knows that he is in therapy. He just thinks that he is playing and looks forward to coming every time.



There have been so many people who have been a part of making Yann's quality of life better. Joe's Kids is a big part of that. I won't ever be able to thank them enough for the difference their time and knowledge has made, and will continue to make, in Yann's life.

-Bekah Dreisbach

Mom to Yann